The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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Notes of the Month.

THE Non-Subscribing Presbyterians and Unitarians have not hitherto seriously thrown themselves into the great missionary movement for the conversion of the Heathen. Doubtless they have found themselves too few in numbers, too much concerned with opposition and the maintenance of their position, apart from the thought that the Heathen are God's children as well as themselves, to be able to do much in that way. But if they have neglected the Heathen abroad, they have not neglected those at home. Indeed, it was they who first established missions to the neglected and distressed poor among us, a step which has been rightly followed by other denominations. At the World Missionary Conference which met in Edinburgh in June, many interesting facts and experiences were adduced in support of the great cause. It was surprising to learn that not less than £5,000,000 are annually spent in trying to endow the Heathen world with the blessings of Christianity, Great Britain and Ireland contributing £2,000,000 of the sum, and the United States and Canada another £2,000,000. Truly, the work is a great one. This does not look as though Christianity were played out yet. Forty years ago, the writer was anxiously and deliberately informed by a friend, that in ten years from that time the office of the Christian minister would have ceased to be! The gentleman who ventured on this prediction prided himself on his political and theological insight. But what a blunder he made! After 40 years have elapsed, the outlook for Christianity is as hopeful as ever it was—probably more so. It contains undying elements. In his efforts at the diffusion of Christianity, may the missionary aim at the presentation of the personality and the Spirit of Jesus, rather than the gruesome doctrines that have grown up around him!

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The committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, at their meeting on July 13th, resolved that in their opinion the new form of Declaration proposed by the Government is a very great improvement upon the present form, and is worthy of the support of all friends of civil and religious liberty. They would, however, person-

ally prefer that the terms should be made still wider and more general, as follows:—"I do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, declare that I will not recognise nor obey any authority, civil or ecclesiastical, other than the laws of my realm; that in my religious beliefs I will refuse obedience to any authority whatsoever over my conscience, and that I will do my utmost to secure for all my subjects the full and free exercise of their religious liberty."

* * *

On a recent visit to the Depository we were pleasantly surprised to see the changes that have taken place there. It looks brighter, cleaner and curiously enough, larger than it did. These improvements are the result of a thorough re-painting and re-arrangement. Entering from the street we are confronted by a counter which runs almost the entire length of the shop, terminating at the upper end with a small office. Behind this counter the wall is covered with shelves on which is arranged a small but select stock of stationery, which has been carefully chosen to suit the taste and pocket of all; we saw pens, pencils of all kinds, ink, gum, paper-fasteners, letter-clips, paste, exercise books, paint or gum brushes, sealing wax, luggage labels, key and umbrella rings, bill-files, and even playing cards and bridge-scoring blocks. Above the stationery are the tracts and other publications of the Ulster Unitarian Christian Association ranged in orderly parcels, while on the opposite wall is a bookcase given up exclusively to general literature; this we noticed, was of the most inexpensive kind, there being a large number of new novels at prices ranging from 5d. to 2/-. The Manager, however, informed us that the stock is not by any means completed yet and that he will be only too pleased to obtain for customers at the earliest possible moment any books not in the shop, and to receive suggestions from likely customers as to the kind of book which should be kept in stock. The hours of business have recently been extended, and the shop is now open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

SERMON

Preached by Rev. J. J. Magill, B.A., in the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, on the occasion of the first meeting of the General Synod of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, on 21st June, 1910.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."—James i., 25.

THE liberty of the individual to think freely for himself on all subjects, but particularly on the great problems of theology, to hold and express his views without fear of pain or penalty is essential to progress and to human well-being. The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland has been set up to guard and to extend that liberty as we are deeply convinced that in the spread of this principle is bound up the future of "pure and undefiled religion," and that from its negation great evils will result, it will not perhaps be considered unfitting if I offer some remarks on this subject on the present occasion.

I shall begin by explaining the nature of the liberty implied and guaranteed by Non-Subscribing Presbyterianism; then I shall say something on the origin and history of our religious freedom, and finally I shall go on to point out what, in my judgment, are the duties and responsibilities inseparable from its enjoyment.

The supporters of Non-subscription are the true children of the Reformation. With regard to the authority to be given to the Holy Scriptures, we have perhaps advanced beyond the position taken up by Luther and his immediate followers. Such a forward movement was inevitable in view of the investigations carried on, and the discoveries made, by men of science. If the Protestants could not admit the claims of infallibility put forward by the Catholic Church, scholars and thinkers soon began to question the same claim when made on behalf of the Bible. That the Holy Scriptures contain the Word of God, and yield to the devout reader a rich store of spiritual truth, sufficient for time and eternity, seems to be a view not violently differing from the old, but standing in the line of natural development. What were the principles of the Reformation? What are the foundation truths of Protestantism?

The Church of Rome insisted that outside its fold there could be no salvation, and it did so on an authority held to be infallible. This position was met by the Reformers in this way: The Holy Scriptures are in themselves all-sufficient, and are the only infallible guide in matters of faith and practice. In the inter-

pretation of Scripture each individual has a right to exercise his private judgment. Human authority in religion must be entirely rejected. No Church, no Pope, no Council, no Synod can legitimately interpret Scripture and then say : This is the only correct interpretation : this is indeed the Word of God : this must be accepted and believed by everybody as divine and authoritative : no other view can be permitted : all who doubt are outside the pale of salvation.

The Protestant, therefore, if he would be consistent, must take his stand on these three principles : the sufficiency of Scripture, the right of private judgment, and the rejection of all human authority in religion. Now, I say we Non-Subscribers are the true children of the Reformation, because we build our Church on those great principles, only asking that allowance be made for the advance of knowledge—an advance to which freedom of inquiry naturally led. It seems to us that any man, or body of men, who draw up a creed, and insist on others accepting it, are simply taking up the old dangerous and untenable ground occupied by the Roman Hierarchy. What the outcome of that desire in the past has been the page of history makes clear. When our forefathers were drawing up the Constitution of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, they set forth the evils of creeds and confessions in beautiful and classical language, and I cannot do better than quote paragraph 5 from that constitution : We there read—" That the imposition of human tests and confessions of faith, and the vain efforts of men to produce an unattainable uniformity of belief, have not only tended to encourage hypocrisy, but also to restrict the sacred right of private judgment—to lessen the authority of the Scriptures—to create unrighteous divisions among Christians—to sanction the most barbarous persecution—to trench on the natural and civil rights of men—to place undue power in the hands of the few—to throw a shield over the time-serving—to expose the honest to injuries and persecutions—to perpetuate errors in almost all churches—and to prevent that free enquiry and discussion which are essential to the extension of religious knowledge."

That description of the evils of creeds was true of the time of the Remonstrants, and it is even more true to-day. If progress be not permitted inside the Church, it will go on in spite of the Church, but the results will be disastrous to religion. Science, instead of being the hand-maid of theology will become its deadly enemy. The Church will be regarded as the fortress of darkness, superstition, and old-world ideas, and no self-respecting, independent, enlightened man will enter its doors. What a sight to make men and angels weep is that of muzzled preachers standing before their congregations trying to reconcile doctrines which nobody can or ought to believe, with modern teaching, which the reading man knows to be sound and unanswerable ! What a pitiable condition of affairs prevails when the Church which might be (and some day we hope will be) the channel for the free flow of God's spirit for the guidance and direction of men, ties itself down hand and foot to the ideas of sixteenth and seventeenth century theologians ! The advancement of the last fifty years in almost all departments has been wonderful. But the old creeds still remain. They are the " Dead Hand " holding back the people who are prepared to move forward. The eternal decrees admitting a few to everlasting life, and consigning the majority to never-ending death, are still in force. Every young, aspiring, optimistic soul who longs to teach and to preach to his fellow-men is prevented from doing so, unless he is willing to bind himself to proclaim as the Gospel many doctrines as repulsive as Foreordination. Now, contrast with the position of those who are thus forced into fetters that of the ministers and elders of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Every member, whether he occupy the pulpit or the pew is perfectly free to follow the guidance of God's spirit. He is encouraged to think for himself on all the problems of his time, to form his own conclusions after careful and prayerful consideration, and to make known what he believes without fear of pain or penalty. If, instead of turning his face to the light and allowing it to shine through him to others, he prefers to keep his eyes on the ground and let his neighbours solve his difficulties, then he does not rise to his opportunities. No new discovery of science, no advancement of learning can shake the foundations of our faith. Our quest is for the truth. The truth is our religion. There can be no higher authority. God is truth. There is sufficient room in our system for all fresh discoveries. Hence we look to the future. We believe the higher the barriers are raised the more difficult is it made for truth to find an entrance. Level the barriers and truth will flow in like a mighty river, gaining in volume as it passes along. Such is the position of our Non-Subscribing Church. We believe the position is honourable. We think it is in keeping with the spirit of the age. We are grateful to Almighty God who has permitted us to enjoy this " perfect liberty " to which He has called us.

How did this liberty originate ? Is it possible to trace back again the way along which our forefathers came from the day when they first settled in this country as planters from Scotland ? The story is not only interesting but heroic. I think the great men who carried on with much self-sacrifice the struggle for freedom are well-deserving of our grateful remembrance this day. It would appear that for some eighty years after the erection of the first Presbyterian congregation in Ulster, that of Ballycarry, there was no meeting of a General Synod representing all the congregations. Whatever, therefore, was done during this period in the way of ascertaining the soundness of faith of the ministers and

students must have been carried through by the Presbyteries. It is probable that a good deal of freedom of thought was enjoyed. The Old Confession on which most of these men had been nurtured was milder than the Westminster Confession by which it was afterwards supplanted. It is recorded that the question of subscription was put forward at the first General Synod in 1692. Not much, however, seems to have been done. In 1705 the subject was again discussed, and at this Synod subscription to the Westminster Confession was made the law of the Church.

What brought about this departure from the old freedom ?

The Rev. Thomas Emlyn of Dublin had been accused of denying the doctrine of the Trinity. He was tried, found guilty, and had the honour of being the first to suffer very severely for Unitarianism in Ireland. Alarmed at the heresy of Mr. Emlyn the Synod in 1705 decided in favour of subscription. It was not, however, to be expected that love of liberty could be crushed so easily. The same year saw the springing into vigorous life of the " Belfast Society " which proved to be the nursery of non-subscription. The names of Rev. John Abernethy of Antrim, and of Dr. James Kirkpatrick of Second Belfast are deserving of mention in this connection. They gathered around them in the " Belfast Society " some of the ablest and most scholarly men in the Syuod. A keen controversy, carried on by means of pamphlets arose. Then another martyr to freedom appears, the Rev. Thomas Nevin of Downpatrick, who, in 1724, was expelled from the Synod. This expulsion brought on the crisis. The Presbyteries were re-arranged so that all the non-subscribers might be found in the same Presbytery, and then on 21st June, 1726, the non-subscribing Presbytery of Antrim was cut off from Synod. Seventeen ministers, with their congregations were thus privileged to prove their attachment to their principles. Those men are the real founders of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The influence of their noble example no doubt inspired those who a hundred years later were to fight a similar battle with a like result.

"For freedom's battle once begun, And passed from bleeding sire to son, Though baffled oft, Is always won." The Presbytery of Antrim after almost two hundred years of life is still vigorous and worthily maintains the proud traditions which it has inherited. But the event proved that in the long run the conquered in the non-subscription controversy of the early eighteenth century were really the conquerors, for in 1784 a resolution was carried in Synod which left the matter of subscription once more, as it had been at first, in the hands of the Presbyteries, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was found that of fourteen Presbyteries in the Synod of Ulster, only four were in practice subscribers. Had this desirable state of affairs been allowed to continue the whole of the great Presbyterian Church might have been with us to-day. But in that case there would have been no occasion for the noble stand made for liberty by the Remonstrants of whom I would now briefly speak.

The ground of dispute was the same as in the previous century, subscription or non-subscription, though this later controversy was marked by differences of doctrinal belief which were not so prominent in the earlier conflict. After much skirmishing the struggle really began in earnest at the meeting of Synod held in Strabane in 1827, was continued at Cookstown in 1828, and virtually ended in Lurgan in 1829. It was a battle of giants. Dr. Henry Cooke, the orthodox champion, was a man of great eloquence, of unfailing resource, and of unbending purpose. He skilfully managed to identify Toryism in politics with Orthodoxy in religion, and so gathered to his support those who were opposed to progress in both departments. Dr. Henry Montgomery, the Arian champion, was equally distinguished with his rival for eloquence and power of leadership. In politics he was a Whig and in favour of Catholic Emancipation, which was then the burning question of the day, and one which caused much uneasiness to Protestants in the North of Ireland. It is always easy on such a subject as this to raise prejudice in this country, and the most was made of the opportunity as against the New Light Party. At Strabane in 1827 a resolution was carried requiring all members of the Synod, those absent as well as those present, to bear public testimony to their views regarding the Trinity, by declaring " Believe the doctrine or not " in reply to the words of the Shorter Catechism : " There are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

This was bad enough. Worse was to follow. At Cookstown in 1828 a series of resolutions was carried subjecting all students and licentiates to a most searching examination as to their beliefs and motives and spiritual experience at the hands of a Committee of Synod The self-respect of the Arians could not bear the humiliation any longer. No more gallant battle was ever waged than that carried on by Montgomery and his gallant lieutenants. Of these the Rev. Fletcher Blakely of Moneyrea. Rev. Nathaniel Alexander of Crumlin, Rev John Mitchell of Newry, and Rev. Robert Campbell of Templepatrick are deserving of special mention. But courage and sound argument were of no avail against the forces of reaction and intolerance. The non-subscribers were placed in an impossible position. There was nothing left for them but to withdraw, which they did, and on Tuesday 25th May, 1830, in the Church of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, held their first meeting as the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster. The small but noble band consisted of 17 ministers, and they were supported by their congregations. There were many more non-

subscribers in the General Synod but circumstances were too strong for them, and they bowed their necks to the yoke. The founders of the Remonstrant Synod could not know how far their people would go with them. In loyalty to principle they risked everything. All honour to these brave men ! We who cherish their principles will not allow their names to be forgotten. Of these two gallant regiments, with some additions, our Non-Subscribing Church is to-day composed. If we are to be worthy to occupy their places we must recognise the weight of responsibility that rests upon us.

How then are we to make effective use of this liberty so dearly won by our predecessors and passed on to us ? We must not turn away from the opportunities that offer for making our principles known from pulpit and platform, and through the press. A Church without Missionary spirit is a Church without a future. In England a praiseworthy effort is being made to go to the people with our message of love and hope by means of travelling vans. Considerable success has attended this venture. Whether a similar method would be advisable here is a matter for serious consideration. It is not my object so much to point out a way of spreading our views as to emphasise and drive home the fact patent to everyone, that unless the propagation of our free principles in new fields be taken up immediately and carried on persistently, we shall gradually decline in numbers and influence, and our glorious gospel will be lost to the country through the timidity, or faithlessness, or both, of those who are responsible for its existence.

But there are other means which I think might be more widely utilized than at present. The charge is often brought against us that we are advanced thinkers, not because we sincerely hold that position, but because we are vicious, and desirous of giving unrestrained indulgence to that which is evil within us.

There is one way and only way of successfully meeting that charge. We have it in Paul's direction to Titus : " In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works ; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannotbe condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed having no evil thing to say of you."

In short, the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian, or to give him his best known name, the Unitarian, must be a better man than his neighbour. He must be strictly truthful, implicitly reliable, pure and temperate. Twenty shillings in the pound he must always pay. Thus he will force the respect of those who are so ready to take up an attitude of superiority. Then if any church in the community be more interested in the poor, the down-trodden, the oppressed, we are much to blame. Temperance is a work which should be congenial to us, and given whole-hearted support. The suppression of war, combating of gambling, spread of education, overthrow of superstition, bigotry and narrowness:—in all these, and other good movements, we should be found in the van. Not words, but earnest work, cheerfully undertaken, and courageously carried through will make of our church a successful institution. For " whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

SUNDAY MORNING SOLILOQUIES OF HEZEKIAH GOODENOUGH.

RECORDED BY REV. W. S. SMITH.

THE WILES OF THE DEVIL.

SUNDAY has come again, and here I am at home instead of going to Meeting. I wonder whether this neglect arises from advancing years, carelessness, spiritual poverty, or—or the wiles of the devil. Ah—the devil! He is something to soliloquise about. He is a very important personage, and has much to do in the affairs of men. I believe him to be a wily old rascal, who gloats over sin and misery. I believe he loves to prevent folk from going to Meeting, where they may hear something to their advantage ; that he is in the height of his glory when he can seduce young and old from truth, right, duty, and God. But it is his especial pleasure to lead astray the lights—the burning and the shining lights—of the congregation : not, however, that I am one of them by any means. If I am a light at all, it is only a poor, thin rush-light. No ; I don't let my light, poor as it is, shine before men. I am too modest for that. Rather do I hide it under a bushel—at home.

I also believe the devil loves sin in its darkest forms—robbery, murder, every abomination man can set his hand to. He's the boy for malicious wisdom, for craftiness, for hypocrisy. He's the boy for lying in wait to deceive, for setting hooks and spreading nets. He possesses the art of thought-reading and of thought-inspiring, to a marvellous degree, while he incites to all manner of wickedness. There is a youth putting his hand into his master's till ; see how suspicious he looks. He is inspired by the devil. There is a religious wolf in sheep's clothing ; see how he glances in two directions at once. He is one of the devil's chaplains. There is a man forging a cheque for a thousand pounds ; see how he trembles with excitement. The devil is guiding his hand. There is a man whetting a knife to plunge into the heart of a fellow-creature ; see, murder is written on his countenance—written there by the devil. Indeed, it is difficult to say in what dirty work the devil has not a hand. He is an attendant upon high life and low life. He mounts the chariot with kings, and jogs along

the road with beggars. He is at the head of a countless host.

But though he is such a tyrant, many people seem to think it would be a literal impossibility to get on without him. Their hearts are so vile, their purposes are so vicious, their language is so low, their conduct is so base, that they are sometimes actually astonished at their own villainy, and they ask themselves, whence it comes. Is it from God? Surely not. Does it spring from their own hearts? That is impossible. Whence, then, is it? Ah! it is all the devil's doing, say they.

Now, this is both a sop and a plea; and I don't think it altogether fair treatment. Give the devil his due, say I, but let us give our hearts theirs also. No; I protest against people making the devil a scapegoat when their sins manifestly arise from their own vicious, sordid, malicious inclinations. It is easy, and may be sometimes pleasant and convenient, for people to tumble head-over-heels into sin, and then get up and swear the devil caused it. It is cowardly conduct, nevertheless. No; don't blacken the devil's character unnecessarily. It is dark enough already.

It is remarkable how some well-known men have cultivated a close acquaintance with the devil without fearing contamination. His presence to Martin Luther seemed very real. He was daily in his thoughts; but it was generally with a view to resisting him. And he did not always treat him respectfully, or he would not have thrown the ink-pot at his head as a parting compliment on one of his supposed visits. And how striking were Milton's conceptions of him! What marvellous word-pictures has he drawn of his satanic majesty—pictures startlingly vivid, fearfully realistic! I have often thought I should like to get a good look at the old gentleman. If permitted a sight of him, I think I should exclaim—"Devil, I defy thee!"

But it is his place in theology which has been at once his glory and his shame. And I must confess, when I think of his doings there, I feel indignant—very. What business had he, the dirty old scoundrel that he is, to upset the theological apple-cart? Indeed, the more I think of him, in his ways and works, the more I despise him. He has his finger in everybody's pie; his stick in everybody's porridge-pot.

It appears the devil can boast of a high pedigree. He was at one time in Heaven, and inspired by the thought of his eminence, kicked up a dust there, was pitched out, and alighted somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Garden of Eden. There, some time afterwards, he found an innocent and unsuspecting couple whom he set his heart upon corrupting. A devil himself, he wanted to bestow upon them somewhat of his own fiendish nature; and he succeeded with his oily tongue, more's the pity, in his infernal designs, and by that means, so it is said, "brought death into the world and all our woe." It is mortally provoking to think of this. There seems to me to have been a screw loose somewhere. I wish I had been there with my pitchfork; I would have measured it with his—if he had one—the crafty, old deceiver!

But it is of no use crying over spilled milk. We have to make the best of a bad job. In consequence of his performances, our first parents contracted sin; but the guilt of that sin was not confined to Adam and Eve. Woe is me! It was transmitted by them to their children, and from them to all posterity, whereby, as the Westminster *Confession of Faith* says—"We are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." A terrible misfortune this! My temper rises when I contemplate the business, for it appears to me to have been a miserable, bungling affair. I know it is wicked to entertain cruel wishes, but I have heard the minister say that of two evils, if you are bound to take one of them, it is better to choose the lesser; and so I have often thought what a blessing it would have been if that big ship of which Noah was captain, had been wrecked and all on board lost, there might then have been a new and better beginning. The previous mistakes might have been avoided, and the start in life have been much fairer than it was. I ought to be treated according to my merits, and not made responsible for the deeds of my first parentse I could not help being born. I was not presene in Paradise consenting to the devil's misdeeds. and yet, in this far-off corner of God's blessed earth, six thousand years afterwards, here am I, painted all over, as black morally as a nigger is literally, with that dirty, long-handled brush wielded by the devil, and responsible for the dirt, too! That's the fun of the thing! And yet there's not much fun in it. He's certainly a wonderful artist. If I had only caught him blackening me all over in this way, I do not think there would have been a very civil parting.

And folk are taught to believe all this!

I am not satisfied with this arrangement. Indeed, the more I think of it, the more am I inclined to believe that someone—a theoloigan, I fear—has been playing me false. What, indeed, do I want with the devil? There are difficulties enough in life without adding to them. There are dangers enough by the way, without multiplying them. The fact is, I am beginning to think we could do better without the devil than with him, and that the best thing that could happen would be the garrotting of him. He is, however, so subtle, so slippery, so interwoven with the events of history, custom, thought, civilisation, that I fear he will require a good deal of killing. But when he is dead, I do not think the world in general will go into mourning for him; though I verily believe the systematic theologians will, for they will never be able to get on without him. To them, his is a necessary existence, the life of their teaching,

a fourth person of the Trinity, appointed, I suppose, at the celestial pre-Adamic council.

So far as I can discover, after looking up a few facts, the Jews appear to have got hold of the devil fully matured during their captivity in Babylon, and when they returned to Palestine they brought him with them ; that is, they believed they had him, for I am inclined to think it was only a fancy after all. If there is an Almighty Power in the world, in the universe, God, what room is there for, or need of, a devil ? Is not God sufficient of Himself to govern ? And is it creditable to any intelligent system of religious thought, to suppose that God could not manage things in the best way without being bamboozled by a devil ? Upon my word, but I am beginning to think this is a Pagan notion from beginning to end.

I cannot bring my mind to believe that evil, as the doctrine of a personal devil implies, is eternal, because such a view would be diametrically opposed to the idea of a good and righteous God. What I call evil is therefore to my short-sighted powers, but lesser good, will be used for the elimination of good, over-ruled for good. My belief in a heavenly Father compels me to this view Evil is permitted, but I cannot suppose it to be eternal, because Christ—truth, goodness, right—must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Good-bye, Sir Devil ; Hezekiah Good-enough has no need of thee !

THE RAVEN PATROL IN CAMP.

A LETTER TO A BOY SCOUT.

My dear boy,

Many thanks for the photo you have sent me of your patrol of Boy Scouts. It is very interesting to me and I am glad to know that you have joined and I hope that you will try to become a really good and efficient Scout and not merely be content with it as a kind of game. You must remember that in giving in your name you take certain responsibilities as to behaviour, such as to be honourable, truthful, courageous, and above all things self-denying. In fact if you carry out the injunctions given to you by your great leader, General Baden-Powell, you will become what I could most wish for you, a gentleman in the true sense of the word. But to do this you must always have before you the fact that the picturesque hat must cover a brain ever ready to think of and for others, and the tunic must conceal a heart always full of kindness and love for your brothers, sisters and companions.

We are all rather inclined to see the failings and faults of those around us sooner than their good qualities, and this is a thing you should beware of. Always try to see what is best and nicest in those you are brought in contact with rather than their defects. Your Scoutmaster, when he takes you for a long ramble through the woods, points out to you the beauties of nature, the fresh green foliage of the trees, the colour and

form of the flowers. He does not draw attention only to the withered branches and to the thorns. And so it is in life: we should try to see the good and beautiful and not the evil. And by this I do not mean that you should shut your eyes to sorrow and suffering; quite the contrary, for it is strictly enjoined on every Scout to be helpful to others whenever he has the opportunity, and try to act in such a way that he brings brightness and happiness with him, and leaves people better than he finds them. Remember you have a duty both to your family and friends, and to your country. The first one calls but seldom for any heroic or noble act. We all feel at times how easily we could dash into a burning house and carry out the child who is lying insensible in one of the rooms, or plunge into the icy stream and rescue the poor boy who is sinking for the last time. But how hard it is to get up early in the morning when it is dark and cold, or to give up an exciting game of cricket in order to go a message for mother. Yet these small things go to make up our lives, and not only do they make things easier for those around us but by degrees the "little acts of kindness, little words of love" form our own character and are of the greatest benefit to ourselves.

Never get into the habit of speaking rudely or roughly. If you lose your temper you lose one of your most precious possessions. If you think you ought to say No to any one you can do so gently and firmly without being rude. And that brings me to another point viz., the absolute need for every boy to learn to say No. Do not be led into doing what you know to be wrong because you don't like to refuse when Jack or Jim asks you. "I didn't think" very often begins the excuse for some act of folly or disobedience, and as a rule this is not the cause of your wrong-doing, the real reason being that you thought the other boys would call you a "funk," or consider you a poor-spirited boy if you did not join in their scheme. Many a boy smokes a cigarette because he thinks it makes him look a fine, dashing fellow! Nothing of the sort; it generally makes him look a poor, mean, yellow-faced object, sick and sorry.

By making ourselves good and useful in everyday life we fit ourselves for the larger duty towards our King and Country. This great and wonderful Empire is made up of single persons like you and me, and if each one of us only made himself good and honourable what a really great nation we should be—no one lazy, or idle, or untruthful. Always remember that if you do wrong you shame not only yourself and your friends but your country.

I cannot do better than conclude my letter to you with the little rhyme that I dare say you know quite well—

"Do the work that's nearest though 'tis hard at whiles,
Helping, when you meet them, lame dogs over stiles."

REPORTS.

Belfast: York Street.—Mr. John Davies, of the H.M. College, Manchester, has accepted a unanimous call of the congregation to become assistant and successor to the Rev. Alex. O. Ashworth, who, on account of health, retired from active duties in May, 1909, and became minister emeritus. It is expected that Mr. Davies will begin his duties with the first Sunday of August.

Ballyclare, Crumlin and Templepatrick.—The annual Sunday School fete held by these Sunday Schools took place on Saturday, 25th June, the meeting place being the Manse, Crumlin. About forty people journeyed by brake from Ballyclare and eighty from Templepatrick. The two contingents joined up in Templepatrick and proceeded via Ballyrobin and Killead to Crumlin. On arriving tea was served, after which the afternoon was spent, as usual on such occasions, with games, etc., in a field adjacent to the manse. About five o'clock all the company assembled on the lawn when tea was again served, after which votes of thanks to Rev. S. E. Bowen and the Crumlin congregation, proposed by Rev. W. Fielding, seconded by Mr. S. Ritchie, and supported by Rev. A. Turner brought a pleasant afternoon to a close.

Ballyhemlin — Rev. Charles Thrift. — On Sunday, June 26th, after the morning service at the Ballyhemlin Non-Subscribing Church, there was held a special meeting of the congregation, at which Mr. Walter P. Allen, J.P., presided. The occasion was to bid farewell to their minister, the Rev. Chas. Thrift and Mrs. Thrift. An address beautifully framed, &c., was presented to Mr. Thrift

and a purse of sovereigns to Mrs. Thrift. The occasion was in many respects a sad one, and the speeches made, referring to the fourteen years' successful and helpful ministry of Mr. Thrift and the great self-sacrificing help given by Mrs. Thrift, showed how deeply both had entered into the love and esteem of their people. Mr. Thrift in feeling terms thanked them for this tribute and generous present on behalf of Mrs. Thrift and himself, and said he hoped to see them again when the ties that were now being severed would be renewed under different but no less pleasant auspices He hoped to return in the summer for his holidays, and seek renewal of health and strength amid the scenes that had been familiar and dear for so long. Mr. Thrift leaves the country of his adoption with the esteem and good wishes of all his numerous friends.

Glenarm.—On Tuesday, 19th July, the Choir and Sunday School children, along with some members of the congregation and friends of other denominations, had their Annual Excursion. Leaving the Meeting-house about 9-45 a.m. in three large brakes, the party made the journey along the coast to Glenariff Although the sun did not shine out, the day was an ideal one for a trip, not too warm, and there was no discomfort arising from showers of rain, or clouds of dust. Arriving at their destination about one o'clock, the excursionists did full justice to the tea with its accompaniments which were served in the Tea House. The afternoon was spent in viewing the beautiful glen, with its rich profusion of foliage, and the waterfalls, which, owing to the recent spell of dry weather, were not seen at their best. The remainder of the time was passed in dancing and other amusements, and refreshments having been partaken of, the members started for Glenarm which was reached about 9 p.m.

Larne and Kilwaughter Sunday School.—On Friday, July 1st, the scholars attending the above school, with their teachers and friends, enjoyed their annual excursion, reverting to their old love, Garron Tower, this year in preference to Templepatrick, to which they drove this time twelve months. At the time of leaving, and before, the weather was decidedly unpleasant, which deterred many whose genial presence could under ordinary circumstances be confidently reckoned upon. Once outside the boundaries of Larne, the weather became, and continued, all that could be desired, until the same boundaries were almost reached on return, when the weather gods once more became unpleasantly attentive for a few minutes. But high spirits and the desire to please and be pleased overcame a drawback so trifling. At the Tower, nature and art were seen once more in their well-known, but ever new and fresh, charm and beauty, and after a much enjoyed refreshment the velvetty lawn became the scene of much hilarity on the part of the young under the supervision of their teachers. Needless to say, football was much affected by the boys, while games and races, in which, by a new system invented by Mr. Frank Wright, every runner eventually gained a prize, were indulged in by all the juveniles with much spirit and enjoyment, their seniors meanwhile basking luxuriously in the sunshine or enjoying a stroll through the grounds or up the mountain side. In addition to those who travelled by M'Neill's brakes, a goodly contingent of both sexes made their way by their "harmless necessary bikes," adding thus exhilarating exercise to the enjoyment of the pure ozone of old ocean, and the delightful scent of bean and clover fields on the land side. The catering at the Tower was good; the manageress and her assistants, male and female, courteous, friendly and attentive; the brake drivers, decent, sober men, and some of them witty withal, so that altogether no pleasanter day was ever spent by those, whether, pupils, teachers, or friends, who have been in the habit of joining in this now annual excursion.

Newtownards.—The thirteenth annual floral service in connection with the First (or Old) Presbyterian Church, Newtownards, was held on 3rd July. The building was beautifully decorated with flowers and foliage, the pulpit being artistically decorated with violet and white flowers. There was a large congregation, who much appreciated the appropriate address delivered by the esteemed pastor of the church, Rev. R. Maxwell King, who took for his text the 7th and 8th verses of the 40th chapter of Isaiah. Special music was rendered at the service, Miss Doggart efficiently presiding at the organ. Miss Barnes, Kilnaturney, rendered in beautiful voice the solo "My Lord and I," accompanied by Rev. Mr. King.

ECHOES.

Notwithstanding that the Pope by means of infallible (?) proclamations, tries to prevent it, the world still moves intellectually and spiritually. The Holy Father has recently said some unpleasant things about the German reformers of the sixteenth century, denouncing them as being "not reformers, but corrupters" of the people, and "enemies of Christ who mind earthly things, whose God is their belly," and who "truckled to the most corrupt passions of princes, or of peoples." Not bad this, in its way, which, however, is a bad way. Where religion comes in is a mystery. Apparently there is no room for the sole of its foot. Germany glories in the reformers, who were men of great mark in their day, and are so still. They lighted candles in that country as did Ridley and Latimer in England, which have not yet been extinguished. They were men with the limitations of their age, as were those of Britain, believing in salvation by creed, rather than by conduct, and so made mistakes, but were great notwithstanding. Spain also has come under the lash of the Vatican, but King

Alfonso will not be much hurt by it, his sin consisting in granting permission for the Protestants to hold services for public worship. Episcopal fulminations have been hurled against the King and his brave Prime Minister Senor Canalejas, to which the latter has replied that the Church must submit to the State. Time was when a Pope could virtually tread on the necks of Kings. Heaven be thanked that day has passed.

* * *

In the previous issue of this magazine, the opinion was expressed that the Congregational heresy case at Doncaster would have very far-reaching effects. Such is already proving to be the case. After the judgment given by Mr. Justice Joyce, no congregation can be secure in the enjoyment of its church building and endowments (where such exist), whose trust deed is a doctrinal one. Should the minister contravene it, and a member raise the question, the minister's mouth will be closed, and he must vacate the pulpit. And places of this kind are *Free* Churches ! Heaven save the mark ! Now, it is stated, that not only are five-sixths of the older foundations of the Congregational body based upon Calvanistic trust deeds, but it is believed that all the Calvinistic trust deeds of Welsh and English Calvanistic Methodist churches, and there are very many of them, are held by congregations who have no faith in Calvinism whatever ! The position is a most serious one. The " dead hand " will press very heavily indeed in cases of this kind. The framers of the deeds never once supposed that while truth may not change, man's views of it do. What was regarded as truth a hundred years ago, has in some respects become musty, like the parchment on which it was written ; but though the views have changed the power of the trust deed is as influential as ever. All in bondage, therefore, will have to strike for freedom—the freedom conferred by legislation. Let it be borne in mind that had these churches been non-subscribing, that is, not founded upon doctrinal trust deeds, the disaster at Doncaster could not have happened, and the Calvinistic churches of England and Wales would not have been threatened. This theological earthquake will powerfully influence many minds in favour of Non-subscription.

* * *

Halley's Comet has been, and gone again. How many, or rather, how few, saw it ? What the better, or the worse, are we ? Instead of being burned up by its fiery tail, we did not even get a whisk from it. I think the comet treated us shabbily. Every one was agog to behold it. Every one asked where it was to be seen, and looked, and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. What were comets for if not to be seen ? But notwithstanding all the fuss and pother about it, the comet has been very influential among the ignorant and superstitious. Those who took their lives in anticipation of its injurious effects are past regretting their folly. But what are those shallow, ridiculous, superstitious people who threw away their property or insured against the depredations of the comet, thinking of their childish folly ? Surely the fact has been brought home to them that it is far better to trust Providence than " old wives' fables." Yes, though innocent of real harm, the comet has much to answer for. Did darkness becloud the sky ? Halley's comet did it. Was it warmer than usual? Halley's comet caused it. Was the weather very dry ? Halley's comet was responsible. Were fruit buds affected ? Halley's comet was held responsible. Did a fowl take gapes and give up the ghost ? Halley's comet was answerable. Did my neighbour's cow take ill and die ? Still Halley's comet was the cause. Evidently the devil has lost his post, for what would under ordinary circumstances have been attributed to him, has been attributed to Halley's comet. I am glad it has gone, and may it be attended with better luck when it comes again, though few of us will be here to see it, and may wisdom then prevail where folly now rules.

* * *

The decline of religious observances and the attendant disregard of the Lord's day still compels attention. It is mentioned in pulpits when Sunday sinners cannot unfortunately hear what is said, in Sunday magazines, at society meetings, and doubtless also, by many firesides. One person attributes the decline to one thing, another, to another thing. An eminent London Congregational minister lays much stress on theological unrest, as a cause. Certainly doctrinal questions are being revolutionised. Dr. Horton, the minister referred to, also thinks the prevailing forms of religious services answerable for much. But religion has flourished with present forms of service. I do not think Dr. Horton in these things has touched the main evil, or even one of them. It may be presumptuous on my part, but I think the great cause is the decline of vital interest in religious matters generally, combined with an insatiable passion for exciting amusements. The attendance at a meeting conducted by six of the most eminent living preachers, would, I believe, contrast most unfavourably with that at a football match in a populous centre. Everything of a serious nature must now be put aside for amusement, for excitement—hockey, golf, cricket, cycling, motoring and football. The late Sir Alfred Jones, the shipowner, shortly before his death, reproached clerks with being so infatuated with amusements and the desire to get at them that duty was of secondary importance, that while they had the pen in hand their eyes rested on the clock ! The charge was a serious one, and if true, betokened an entire absence of interest in the well-being of the employer.

* * *

Summer is here and along with it thunderstorms. At least we have had several that

have proved destructive of life. But in Ireland nature is kind, for are we not free from destructive cyclones, devastating floods and annihilating earthquakes ? We are also subject to fewer and less violent thunderstorms than are some parts of England, where the heavens are truly set on fire with falling thunder-bolts [W. C. Bryant]. It is not every one who can witness unmoved, scenes of this character. Some become nervous and tremble with fright. Some are anxiously disturbed and would go anywhere to escape the crashes incident to a thunderstorm. How helpless do we feel as flash follows flash of heaven's artillery. Whether at home or exposed in the open country, we wonder which is the safest place. When in the country, some unfortunately take refuge under trees, probably the most dangerous positions known. I once heard a scientific lecturer state that in his opinion, the safest out-of-door place in a town, was clutching a lamppost, since this, while attracting electricity from the air, conducts it safely into the earth without touching the human body. The iron attracts far more powerfully than a man, and thus leaves him entirely untouched, even should the lamppost be struck. In a field the safest position is lying prone between furrows. If the clothes are wet, so much the safer. It is dangerous to be between high hedgerows during a thunderstorm. At home a cellar is a pretty safe place, also the centre of a room and resting on an iron bedstead, especially if near the ground. The suspense between seeing a flash of lightning and hearing the thunder is often an anxious one. One, two, three, four, five counted deliberately, shows that the danger spot was a mile away. The flash and crash together are dangerous indeed.

* * *

The innocent-looking house-fly is with us once again. This little creature is understood much better now than it used to be, and is found to be a most potent agent of mischief. It not only tarnishes polished articles, but it has been found to be the bearer and depositor of disease germs. A household injunction should henceforth be—" Beware of the house fly." It contaminates bread, milk, fish, flesh, fruit, butter, sugar, preserves, everything nearly of an edible character. In a moment nearly, some flies can deposit eggs that will under favourable conditions, in twenty-four hours, develop into crawling maggots. Decaying substances and offal of all kinds are attractive, and become means for the propagation of flies. In summer, it is recommended that household substances of a fleshy character should be burned—at least not allowed to remain exposed. There are dangers to life on our right hand and on our left, in the air, in water, in what we eat, and what we drink. It behoves us, therefore, to be on our guard and fight the enemies we know, if we cannot those we do not know. The coming of the microbe has been very disturbing. A gentleman in the North of England recently offered rewards of one penny for every 50 house-flies, and the same sum for every 12 blue bottle flies. The offer was made through the Sanitary Department of the Corporation of Middlesborough. The offices were soon besieged, and the time occupied in receiving the various consignments, counting, and settling for the same was so great that the officials during the four days' experiment, hadn't time to attend to their ordinary duties. Cesspools appear to have been invaded, for the Sanitary officer complained, and the distracted advertiser implored the newspapers, if they wished to spare his life, to withdraw the offer. He had, however, spent £10 on the enterprise, a sum representing 120,000 dead bodies of the disease distributor.

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A modern illustration of creating an Estabt lished Church has recently been given a- Lagos, in Southern Nigeria. The custom has been in the case of our colonies to allow the various sects to support their own religious services and institutions, hence, there are no state churches in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It has been reserved for a Conservative and Unionist Government to make a new departure in ecclesiastical craftsmanship, and for a Liberal and Separatist Government to improve upon the experiment. We are continually saying that the world moves but in this instance it is in a backward direction. It is returning for a precedent to the Dark Ages. As may be expected it is not a Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church or orthodox Presbyterian, or Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, or Quaker, that is thus taken under the Governmental wing, but an Episcopalian. It has been brought about in the following manner : in the days of the late Conservative Government, a grant of £100 per annum was made in aid of the salary of the Anglican clergymen at Lagos previously mentioned. This was a commencement, and doubtless the congregation briskly rubbed its hands and blessed itself. Now, a Liberal Government is following the example of its predecessor by proposing to add £480 per annum to the original amount ! The Christian population of the place is said to number about 400. So these fortunate people are virtually to be endowed with 29/- per head per annum of stipend, with which to pay their clergyman. This is to be paid by their friends at home out of the people's pockets here. It is an unfortunate step that may in time to come have serious consequences. It is another illustration of the fact that our Governments, whether Liberal or Conservative, are incapable of legislating justly, on either educational or religious matters.—W.S.S.

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